



The President's Daily Brief

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November 21, 1975

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Israeli Reconnaissance Mission



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ISRAEL-SYRIA

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PORTUGAL

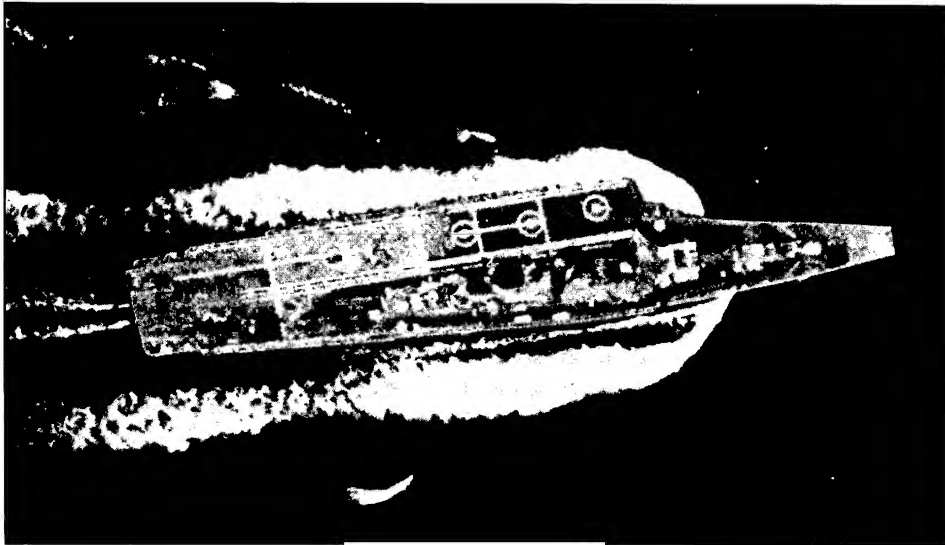
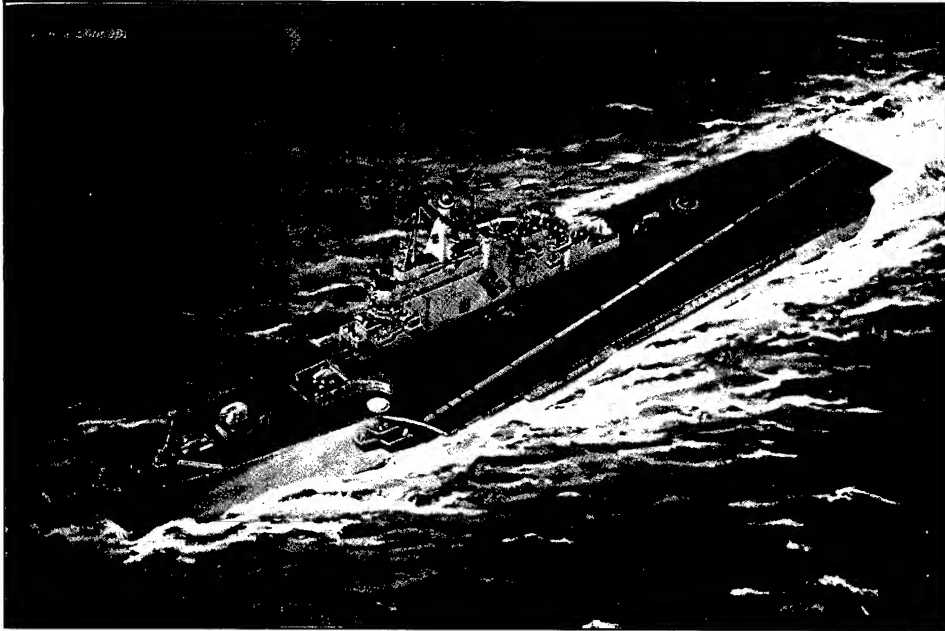
the Portuguese government's suspension of its activities yesterday represents an ultimatum to President Costa Gomes to fire security chief Otelo de Carvalho and Army Chief of Staff Carlos Fabiao. The government's action reportedly was endorsed by all three anti-Communist factions, and apparently their demands are not negotiable.

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No resolution is likely for several days, but Costa Gomes will probably propose various compromises and in the end may bow to the government's wishes. If he refuses to go along, he too could be replaced.

Portuguese officials reportedly believe that a showdown with Costa Gomes is necessary if the government is to function. While the Communists and the far left are expected to fight back and the risk of armed hostilities is high, the government appears united and prepared to take risks to establish once and for all that its authority is based on the support of the majority of the people.

Kiev Carrier



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USSR

The trappings of great-power status for the USSR will soon be enhanced with operational deployment of the first true Soviet aircraft carrier, the Kiev.

Nine hundred feet long, with an angled flight deck of about 600 feet, the Kiev will carry a mix of some 30 to 40 helicopters and short-take-off-and-landing aircraft to provide defense and reconnaissance for cruise missile ships. Two additional Kiev-class carriers will become operational around the end of this decade; one is in the initial phases of construction, and the other was recently launched and will be operational in about two years.

The major significance of the carrier may lie less in its role as flagship of an anti-submarine task force than in its potential political utility and in what it might portend for further naval development. From a political standpoint, the decision a decade ago to build the Kiev represented a sharp break with naval thinking during the Khrushchev era, which contended that it was costly and unwise to follow the Western lead in developing forces with a potential for distant, limited military action.

Under Brezhnev's leadership, the navy has evidently decided that Soviet possession of carrier aircraft is militarily advantageous and politically useful. Soviet navy men have periodically pointed to the political utility of US attack carriers, which can project US power in remote areas. The main striking power of the Soviet navy, however, will continue to be provided by submarine-launched missiles, land-based aircraft, and surface ships.

The Kiev-class will be no military match for US attack carriers, but this point could be lost on all but the most sophisticated third-world audiences. The very appearance of new Soviet aircraft carriers will be interpreted in many parts of the world as a demonstration of Moscow's determination to support its clients.

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There probably will be instances when the Soviets can employ their carriers to affect regional developments--in the Indian Ocean, for instance. In the Mediterranean, where the new carrier is most likely to operate initially, it could give the impression of reducing one area of clear-cut US superiority--sea-launched air operations--although sophisticated observers might note the obvious inferiority of the latest Soviet warship in that role.

From a developmental standpoint, the Kiev-class carrier may be part of a trend, initiated with the appearance of the Moskva-class helicopter carrier several years ago, toward a greater role for aircraft at sea in the Soviet navy. Although the Soviets have disavowed any intention of developing carriers similar to those in the West, it is conceivable that they will be swayed by the multi-purpose advantages that attack carriers offer.

In any case, Soviet leaders seem at present unwilling to concede to the US a continued monopoly of any highly visible symbols of military and political power.

CHINA

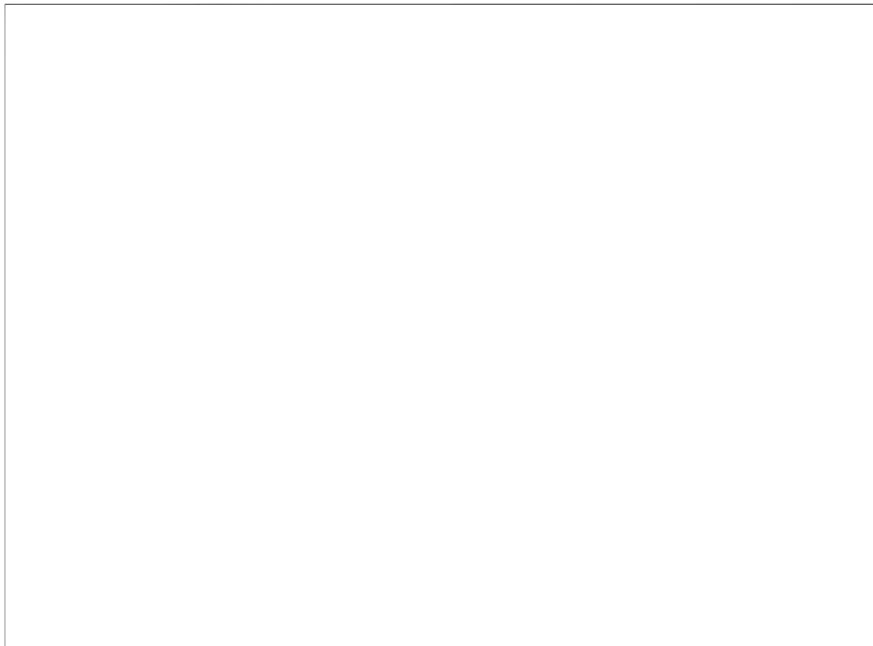
Peking has apparently secured Mao's endorsement for policy changes that will permit the elevation of academic training in China's universities.

The renewed concern for academic quality, in line with China's drive to modernize the economy by the end of the century, would reverse the educational policies adopted during the Cultural Revolution of the mid-1960s. Those policies emphasized politics rather than scholastic achievement and rendered China's universities virtually ineffective as institutes of higher learning.

According to a document circulating within China, Mao has called for more study of basic scientific theory and has warned students to learn from their teachers rather than waste time stating their opinions. The Chairman's turnabout on the educational issue is the latest and most startling confirmation that he has now abandoned some of his visionary ideas of the late 1950s and 1960s and that the party left wing is currently in eclipse.

Possibly emboldened by Mao's show of support for the new educational policies, the minister of education made a speech in September in which he strongly criticized the educational policies of the Cultural Revolution. The minister claimed that the goal of education is not to send students to the rural areas to work as common laborers but to equip them with fundamental knowledge that they can apply to their field of work.

As a result of the minister's speech, Peking and Tsinghua universities, two of China's best, announced that current curricula will be revamped, that science and research will be emphasized, and that entering students will be required to take examinations.



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Soviet [redacted]

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[redacted] the Egyptian-Israeli disen-
gagement area [redacted] no
major changes in either the Egyptian or the Israeli
forces.

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[redacted]
[redacted] The Israelis continue
to withdraw units from the canal area. Hawk sur-
face-to-air missiles and launchers have been re-
moved from the site southeast of Ras Sidr.

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Algeria's denunciation of the Spanish-Moroccan-Mauritanian agreement on Spanish Sahara paves the way for UN debate on the future of the territory.

In a formal note attached to UN Secretary General Waldheim's latest report on the Spanish Sahara problem, Algeria declared the agreement null and void. Algeria is unlikely to initiate direct military intervention but will continue to provide arms, training, and possibly some "volunteers" to the pro-independence Polisario Front. The Front is in fact quietly acquiring a foothold in the Sahara. A French official recently told Ambassador Handyside in Nouakchott that elements of the Front have established themselves along the Mauritanian-Saharan border now that Spain has withdrawn from two thirds of the territory.

* * *

The UN General Assembly last night voted overwhelmingly for a resolution supporting the Greek Cypriot case against Turkey. This will make the Greek Cypriots more amenable to resuming intercommunal talks with the Turkish Cypriots. The Turks, smarting from this rebuff at the UN, will probably hesitate to resume negotiations.

The vote dramatizes Turkey's increasing isolation, even from the Muslim states on whose support it had counted. Although this may increase the Turks' flexibility in the long run, for the time being they are likely to assume a tough line. At the same time, the Turks are mindful that the question of military aid will again come before the US Congress next month. This could prompt a unilateral gesture, such as the withdrawal of more Turkish troops from Cyprus.

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SPAIN

We present the conclusions of a National Intelligence Estimate, Spain: Short-Term Prospects, that was approved yesterday by the US Intelligence Board.

The transfer of powers from Franco to Prince Juan Carlos has so far proceeded without surprises, but has also done little to resolve the serious problems the government will inevitably face. The difficulties of reconciling a political system born in the Civil War and dominated for decades by Franco with a socio-economic system that has changed rapidly since the early 1960s will remain acute.

The critical question is whether a controlled liberalization can gain broader support for the regime without triggering reactions from the Franco right--which may still be able to obstruct political change--and without being exploited by Spain's clandestine Communist Party and separatist groups.

The significant leaders and groups--inside and outside the governing establishment--look to the future with varying combinations of hope and apprehension; all share the uncertainties. Despite many inherent unknowns, prospects for the succession and short-term maintenance of the regime are favorable.

--No combination of opposition elements appears able effectively to challenge the state in the short run at least.

--Terrorism will harden attitudes and make liberalization difficult, but it will not threaten the government's control.

--A large proportion of the people are not politically involved. They are reasonably satisfied with the regime, have prospered under it and do not support any rapid, radical transformation of the system.

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There will almost certainly be some opening up of the system to accommodate democratic opposition groups heretofore excluded. This will probably stop short of legalizing the Communist Party.

--Most opposition groups are, for some months to come, likely to prefer cautious tactics rather than risk the kind of showdown that would strengthen hard-line rightists and undermine liberalization.

--Opposition forces will nonetheless step up their activities and will be pushing for a speedier opening up of the system than the regime will want to permit.

--The Communist Party is the best organized force on the left; it dominates the clandestine workers' commissions and thus has considerable influence in labor.

--If the Communist Party remains excluded from the political process, it can be expected to resort to more militant tactics; it would have some support from the non-Communist left, notably the Socialists.

--Pressures for regional autonomy in the Basque provinces and Catalonia are likely to rise.

Thus, there is likely to be considerable political turbulence and Juan Carlos will play a pivotal role, certainly in the near term. There is little positive enthusiasm for him or the monarchy, but there is a widespread disposition to support him for lack of a more viable alternative.

At the moment, Juan Carlos must be considered an untested figure, and confident predictions cannot be made about precisely how he will come out on specific issues. If he succeeds in preserving law and order while gradually opening up the political process, he will gain more positive acceptance. But the task will be formidable and we are far from certain that he has the qualities to meet it.

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The unity and loyalty of the armed services will be a decisive factor in the orderly transition and subsequent government strains. We estimate that the government can count on effective military backing for the short term. Some of the political and social tensions of Spain as a whole are incipient in some quarters of the officer corps, and while that body remains generally conservative, a polarization of Spanish politics would have some unsettling effect--particularly at junior and middle levels.

At least for the next six months or so, however, we estimate that the military is not likely to intervene in political situations unless one or all of three contingencies occur: a breakdown of law and order that the civil authorities appear unable or unwilling to control; a radical shift to the left in Spanish politics signaled, for example, by legalizing the Communist Party; and/or the emergence of a significant group of young officers calling for faster political change. None of these contingencies appears probable in the short term.

If the right proves able to frustrate significant liberalization, this is likely over time to lead the forces of the left and center into more aggressive opposition. If major disorder ensues, the military would have to intervene. Although the military would probably be able to restore order in the short term, its new role would widen fissures within the military itself and perhaps even lead to precipitate action by politicized junior- and middle-level officers. In such circumstances, the situation could deteriorate rapidly.

The new government will value good relations with the US, although differences over specific economic and political issues will persist. One sore spot could be a tendency to portray the new base agreement as the result of Washington's having taken advantage of Madrid at a particularly vulnerable moment; the Spanish may press to reopen the negotiations.

Madrid's European ties will improve from the recent low point reached after the execution of the terrorists, but the question of accepting Spain into Europe will continue to be a contentious one.

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Some improvement in European attitudes will result simply from Franco's leaving the scene, but more tangible progress toward incorporation into NATO and the EC will be impeded for some time by insistence on more liberalization than the Spanish regime will believe possible without risking loss of effective control over radical groups. Spanish relations with Portugal will continue to be wary on both sides.

The foregoing estimates take account of Spain's current economic slowdown, and the fact that the dramatic economic progress of the past is not likely to be repeated. In time, this could produce political dissatisfaction, but it is not likely to be a critical factor in the next six months or so.

Certain contingencies that are difficult to predict could throw considerably more uncertainty on the prospects for Spain.

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